

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 298 214

UD 026 348

TITLE Youth in Crisis: Living On the Jagged Edge.
INSTITUTION Mott (C.S.) Foundation, Flint, Mich.
PUB DATE 86
NOTE 44p.; Reprinted from the 1986 Annual Report of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Black Colleges; Community Education; Community Involvement; *Community Programs; Community Services; Conservation (Environment); *Cooperative Programs; Economic Development; Employment Programs; *Grants; High Risk Persons; Job Training; Neighborhood Improvement; Nonprofit Organizations; Philanthropic Foundations; *Private Financial Support; Social Systems; *Youth

ABSTRACT

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation is a private non-profit foundation supporting programs across the United States and on a limited basis internationally. The Foundation is interested and involved in improving the quality of life through community self-improvement, education, social welfare, economic development and environmental management. In response to the changing needs of today's complex and broad community concerns, the Foundation supports a variety of approaches organized and interrelated under four principles of grantmaking: (1) opportunity for the individual; (2) partnership with the community; (3) effective functioning of community systems; and (4) leadership as the mobilizer. Within each principle, grants are categorized by missions which provide the context for the Foundation's programming. The current major national areas of activity are the following: (1) at-risk youth, including pregnant adolescents; (2) community education; (3) community foundations and other philanthropic issues; (4) economic development and neighborhood revitalization; (5) employment and training; (6) environment and conservation; (7) historically black colleges; and (8) social welfare. Beyond current program areas, the Foundation also supports program activities which encourage exploration in many other areas of funding. Descriptions of five representative programs, including interviews with participants, are included. (FMW)

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8-23-88

ED 298214

Mott Foundation Special Report
Living On The Jagged Edge

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Youth in Crisis

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TEXT: Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Flint, Michigan.

SPECIAL SECTION TEXT: Carol D. Rugg.

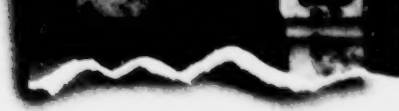
DESIGN AND GRAPHICS: T. S. Jenkins & Associates, Flint, Michigan.

CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY: Michael C. Hayman, Louisville, Kentucky.

Twelve Together photos by John Dickson, Flint, Michigan.

COMPOSITION: Flint Graphic Service, Inc., Flint, Michigan.

PRINTING: McKay Press, Midland, Michigan.



Youth in Crisis:
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*Youth In Crisis:
Living On The Jagged Edge
is a special section reprinted
from the 1986 Annual Report
of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation*

Our Founder



Charles Stewart Mott
(1875-1973)

Charles Stewart Mott, who established this Foundation in 1926, was deeply concerned from his earliest years in Flint with the welfare of his adopted community.

Soon after he had become one of the city's leading industrialists, this General Motors pioneer found a practical and successful way to express his interest. He served two years as mayor (1912-13) during a period when the swiftly growing city was beset with municipal problems, with 40,000 people sharing facilities adequate for 10,000.

As a private citizen, he started a medical and dental clinic for children and helped establish the YMCA and the Boy Scouts in Flint.

Nine years after the Foundation was incorporated for philanthropic, charitable and educational

purposes, it became a major factor in the life of Flint through organized schoolground recreational activities, which developed into the nationwide community education program.

From this start, the Foundation's major concern has been the well-being of the community: the individual, the family, the neighborhood, the systems of government. This interest has continued to find expression in Flint and also has taken us far beyond our home city.

This report deals with the avenues that we explored in 1986 while mindful of the founder's motto: "Let us be known by our deeds, and not by our money."



Our Philosophy

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation is a private non-operating foundation supporting programs across the United States and on a limited basis internationally.

The Mott Foundation has long been interested and involved in improving the quality of life through community self-improvement—from within neighborhoods to within city hall, through education, social welfare, economic development and environmental management. That concern is still evident today in the Foundation's grantmaking interests and priorities.

Today's communities are complex and face a broad range of problems. In response to changing

needs, the Foundation supports a variety of approaches organized and interrelated under four basic principles of grantmaking:

- Opportunity for the Individual
- Partnership with the Community
- Effective Functioning of Community Systems
- Leadership as the Mobilizer

Within each principle, grants are categorized by missions which provide the context for the Foundation's programming. Each mission may contain one or several program areas whose importance may ebb and flow annually. As opportunity presents itself and as dollars become available, some program areas take on greater significance. Regardless of funding limitations that may currently exist in a given program area, we remain interested in creative proposals that are relevant to our overall interests and that might serve as a basis for our future efforts.

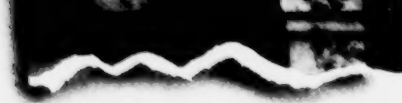
Our current activities are focused in eight major national areas:

- At-risk youth, including adolescent pregnancy
- Community education
- Community foundations and other philanthropic issues
- Economic development and neighborhood revitalization
- Employment and training
- Environment and conservation
- Historically black colleges
- Social welfare

In addition, we fund a variety of activities in our home community, Flint, Michigan.

Beyond current program areas, the Foundation also supports program activities which encourage exploration in many other areas of funding.

For information on how to apply for a grant, see page 90.



Annual Message Yesterday's Children, Today's Victims

Help Me

*My life is falling apart.
My dreams are shattered.
My hopes are faded away.
I have lost the sights to look
ahead to the future.
I need to know who I am but I
don't know where to start.
I want so much to cry, but I'm
afraid that no one will hear me.
I need the chance to reach out to
someone,
but I'm afraid there will be no one
there to catch me.*

Maria was 16 and suicidal when she wrote these words. Her adolescent years are ugly memories of incest and abuse, homelessness, poverty, drugs and anger—anger at a system she was “born into and forced to find my own way out of.”

Maria's background is becoming all too familiar to a growing segment of our nation's young people. These are young people who, for many reasons, live in poverty, drop out of school, often bear children as teens, have chronic problems with substance abuse, find no jobs or only low-paying jobs, and, more often than not, end up on the wrong side of the law.

And if, like Maria, they belong to a disadvantaged minority, the

odds against their finding a way to security and stability are many times greater.

These are our youth in crisis. The stumbling blocks they face, day in and day out, to a healthy and productive life did not develop overnight, but have been a long time in society's making. Recognition of the problem has not come about overnight, either. In fact, there have been many initiatives aimed at addressing the needs of at-risk youth over the years.

While some have been successful in and of themselves, more often than not, the initiatives have not dealt with the complexity of the total picture. Thus, efforts have ended up focusing on treating symptoms rather than causes, and assistance has often gone to those who have had the greatest possibility of “making it”.

Now experts tell us that we really aren't making much progress in the fight to save our youth. And while there is growing recognition of the issue as a national problem, the fact is that children and youth in poverty have few friends to advocate effectively for them. That is one reason that we, and some of our colleagues in philanthropy, believe at-risk youth warrant a high priority in the foundation community.

For our own part, the Mott Foundation has been involved in the issues of at-risk youth from our very beginning. In fact, among the Foundation's first grants in 1926 was a program to provide care and opportunities for underprivileged Flint-area boys.

Over the years, our programming built upon founder Charles Stewart Mott's historical interest in promoting self-reliant individuals. Accordingly, we made funds available for health care and recreational outlets, remedial education, the problems of delinquency, truancy, and dropouts, the consequences of too-early childbearing, and increasingly, joblessness among youth.

In so doing, we have looked at many approaches to deal with the issues of our at-risk youth. In some cases, such as our 1981 annual report, which dealt with the consequences of too-early childbearing, we have already shared those experiences.

It has become traditional for us to focus on a special topic in our annual reports. In 1985, for instance, the focus was on community foundations and how they are becoming the growth area of philanthropy. In 1984, we

offered our experiences in nurturing strong, unified voices through community organizing. Economic development was the focus in 1983, and in 1982, we illustrated how community education is at work across the nation addressing all phases of peoples' lives, concerns and livelihoods.

Given the growing national concern for the plight of our young people, we've chosen to focus this report on our work in youth employment and training. In particular, we are concentrating on our national program, started in 1980, to test hands-on approaches to helping at-risk youth become employable, and to strengthen public policy on behalf of unemployed youth.

As we noted in our 1983 annual report:

"In order for individuals to have an opportunity to be a partner in the American dream, there must be a place for each in our nation's economic system, a place where each can productively use his or her talents. Without that job, without that economic well-being, there is little hope that the individual can be either strong or self-reliant."

We believe this statement holds many messages for us as we look at the epidemic unemployment of our nation's youth.

First and foremost, we must recognize that having a place in our economic system is particularly important for the young—even for those who lack basic education.

Statistics show that of the nation's 35 million young people between the ages of 16 and 24, four million are looking for and unable to find a job. Unemployment rates for black youth are more than 2½ times greater than for whites, and Hispanic youth fall between the two. Without a job, their options are painfully limited and the upshot has been all too apparent.

Second, while creating more jobs for youth is critical, this won't solve the unemployment problem for many unskilled school dropouts. Most entry-level jobs require basic literacy and world-of-work skills, which many dropouts lack.

Unemployment rates for dropouts are almost three times as high as the rates for high school graduates. And studies indicate that being out of school and unemployed for more than 15 weeks leads to recurring

unemployment throughout life. Having a job may be the only chance at security some of these young people will have.

Third, we must realize that for too long we have related to adolescents as "consumers" in need of our services, our assistance. This is not surprising, given traditional thinking.

In fact, young people have potential power as producers, as individuals who, with some help, can take charge of their lives and contribute significantly to the welfare of their communities.

With these things in mind, the Mott Foundation has geared its work in public policy toward advocating that public resources be focused on the truly needy; helping the field through dissemination of research results and replication of successful strategies; and strengthening leadership in the field by encouraging networking, technical assistance and workshops.

In our demonstration programs, our goal has been to devise new approaches to help young people achieve basic educational, occupational and life-coping skills as well as to develop a sense of self-esteem and empowerment.

The fruits of those efforts are detailed in the following pages of this report. But basic to each initiative we have undertaken are certain fundamental points.

We have learned of the importance of having multiple approaches working together and dealing with the whole child. As one expert told us, "You can have all the outcomes you want, but first you have to help kids get their lives together overall."

Another key, we have discovered, is the role education plays—or more often doesn't play—in the lives of young people. We wholeheartedly believe that the nation's educational system plays a central role in the issue of at-risk youth. Our experience suggests that, in the final analysis, there is no alternative to individualized, competency-based instruction in basic academic and coping skills.

We also note, regrettably, that many public education systems have been slow to adopt this type of instruction for those at-risk youth with academic deficits.

Finally, we are more convinced than ever of the importance of not giving up on these young people. In our travels to programs across the country, we are confronted again and again by young people who are fighting their way toward

productivity and independence. And we are seeing approaches that are working, that are changing individual lives for the better.

Beyond opportunity, our young people ask for respect or help in finding self-respect. Searching for those things that spark young people to take charge of their own lives will continue to be among the challenges.

Clearly, these are challenges for which foundations with their flexibility and resources are well-suited. We need to do more exploration and pursue more joint ventures. Building upon knowledge we have gained in recent years, we need to shed light on workable solutions that pave the way for others.

The issue of chronic youth unemployment is not unique to the United States but has become a phenomenon for most industrialized Western nations. As such, the Mott Foundation has found it mutually rewarding to join hands with others in Western Europe in exploring solutions to youth issues.

Still, the United States faces an ominous challenge. Fourteen million children now live in poverty in our country. No longer is the issue merely a serious social

concern, but increasingly, an economic one. Since youth are our future, and since an increasing proportion are growing up at risk, society must take notice and help them.

What is it like, growing up at risk, growing up with three strikes against you before you're born? We thought some young people should tell us for themselves. Contained in the special section of this report are their own candid observations about life. Why are they so willing to share these personal insights and intimacies? Frankly, we were surprised at their candor and hesitant to use their names. But not to do so would be wrong, we were told by program directors across the country.

Not to use their names would deny them much deserved credit and recognition for their personal growth. Further, it would be creating a double standard for those who have been encouraged to "talk straight" about their past. It has been their choice to make their lives an open book, and not just in the pages of this special report. As one program administrator told us, they talk freely, "because they are learning what they can do for themselves and that is empowering."

Empowerment is a key ingredient in Mott programming.

With a history of grantmaking centered upon development of human capital, we have learned there are few limitations for those who would tackle the obstacles to their personal self-fulfillment.

There is much to do. The temptation will always be to get results. The unfinished agenda is recognizing that this is not only a challenge, but an opportunity. School dropout rates can be reduced. The illiterate can learn. The unemployed can be helped.

Like Maria.

Maria proved herself to be a survivor. Her anger propelled her through the doors of various programs in New York City. Those programs, Youth Action Homes Away From Home, The Door and the Youth Action Program, all played a role in helping her find herself. As she put it, "They helped me deal with my anger, stop blaming myself and focus on helping others do the same. I couldn't have done that by myself. I wouldn't have known where to start."

No matter where she started, Maria has come a long way. In January, she was part of an American Field Services delegation to Belfast, Northern Ireland. And in April, she became a paid staff member for the Youth Action

Program with responsibilities as a youth organizer for its Coalition For Twenty Million Dollars.

Maria had a sense that she was turning her life around some time ago. Four years after pouring out her despair in "Help Me," she again took pen to paper and wrote a follow-up.

Visions

*We were the kids of yesterday.
We are the young adults of today
and we will be the parents of
tomorrow.*

*So give us a chance to see the
world and open the doors to
the future.*

*Let us experience what life has to
offer.*

*Give us the space to grow and
learn.*

*Help us to know right from
wrong.*

*Guide us and give us the strength
to succeed in life.*

*Give us the right to explore the
world around us.*

*Let us try to fulfill our goals and
make something of ourselves.*

*Praise us for the good things and
share our pain and
disadvantages.*

*Encourage us to do good and give
us a sense of pride.*

That's all we ask for.

That's all, indeed.

Administration and Governance

At the end of 1986, our assets totaled \$736,873,249, an increase of more than \$72 million over 1985. Income from investments was \$35,840,078, a slight decrease from 1985. The Foundation made 304 grants totaling \$21,393,404 last year. Because we have exceeded Congressionally mandated distribution requirements in the past few years and recaptured that overdistribution in 1986, the Foundation's award totals are lower than usual.



William S. White
President

Youth in Crisis:
Living On The Jagged Edge



Youth in Crisis:
Living On The Jagged Edge

No one has to tell Derek Mosley that there are plenty of ways to make money on the streets. No one has to tell him it's plenty tough to make ends meet while working a job that pays only \$4.25 per hour.

Mosley knows something about both ways of life. He also knows which one he prefers.

For a little more than a year, Mosley, 22, has been part of the East Bay Conservation Corps (EBCC) in Oakland, California, starting at minimum wage with minimal responsibilities and gradually working his way up to more duties and that \$4.25 an

hour. It's a meager living. But, he says, "I've started taking pride in what I'm doing—instead of what I'm being paid."

These days, the Los Angeles native also believes, "I've got plenty of options." He didn't always feel that way.

He recalls feeling in 1981 that he had only one unacceptable choice after failing the 11th grade: repeat the year. But staying behind while his classmates moved closer to graduation was too depressing and humiliating. Repeating 11th grade would have put him in classes with

his younger brother. "Sitting next to my brother—I couldn't take that."

So Mosley quit school, drifted in and out of various odd jobs and tried several training programs before landing at EBCC.

As Mosley puts it, "I was very, very, very popular" in high school. Nevertheless, he was more follower than leader. It was peer pressure, he says, that led him to cut classes and to do a lot of "hanging out" after school. It was peer pressure, again, that got him involved in a rowdy gang whose main goal was to get fast, easy drug money, whether by purse snatching or other petty theft.

Thinking back on it, he says, "I knew it wasn't right. I was scared to death." But the desire to be



Derek Mosley has lived both sides of life.



popular ran deeper. Thus, what the crowd did or suggested, Mosley did as well.

Somehow he managed to keep that part of his life secret from his parents—especially his mother, who married a man Mosley believed for years to have been his natural father. What little Mosley says about his family life does not indicate a particularly tumultuous or unhappy adolescence, except for the discovery that his stepfather was not his natural father—an experience that left him feeling deceived and angry for awhile.

Despite the stepfather's presence, Mosley's mother "did all the raising" of three children. For his mother, Mosley put on an angelic image. "I used to ask her if she wanted me to cook or wanted anything done around the house," he said.

But on the streets, Mosley was a different person. "It was a real Jekyll and Hyde thing."

During the months immediately after quitting school, Mosley worked here and there. A janitorial job initially seemed to hold promise. "I worked my way up to foreman and even had my own little crew after awhile. But I felt I could do better."

He saw friends land good jobs without a high school diploma, yet "there was something inside me—regardless of what they (friends) had—I wanted to have that GED (high school equivalency)."

That desire for more led Mosley to Reno, Nevada, where he joined the Job Corps. Within a few months, he had completed his GED and earned a certificate in front-end mechanics.

Still, more than a few friends back in Los Angeles couldn't understand why he wanted to work for the Job Corps at minimum wage. To him, the reasons became clearer every time he came home for a visit and found out that certain friends were "jailed, dead or drugged out," he says.

After 20 months in the Corps, Mosley left and moved back to his native Los Angeles. There he experienced more bouts with unemployment and what turned out to be a minor—but important—brush with the law. The incident left him with no criminal record, but Mosley was badly shaken.

"I was never behind bars, but I was close to getting there. I think I got scared straight after being that close," he said. He vowed that the police "wouldn't have my prints again." What followed was "a whole bunch of thinking. I knew it was time to find work."

And time to leave L.A. "I needed to get away from that scene. You only imitate your atmosphere. Sometimes just getting in a different atmosphere will pull people through."

Through the local unemployment office, Mosley learned about the San Francisco Conservation Corps and decided to join. He spent several months during 1985 in the corps, fighting fires, making trails and doing other conservation projects. A friend working at the East Bay Conservation Corps convinced him to apply to EBCC.

Two months after joining, Mosley went from crew member to crew leader, thanks to hard work and good recommendations from supervisors. Four months after

that, he was named "education specialist," an office job that requires him to monitor corps members' progress toward completing their educational requirements.

Though Mosley says he sometimes misses the physical and outdoor aspects of working with a conservation crew, he figures the new position provides valuable work experience.

Today, no one has to tell Derek Mosley that he never should have dropped out of high school. "I missed a whole bunch of things—graduation, the prom, being with the crowd that graduated. I missed all that stuff."

And no one has to tell Mosley how different his life would be if he hadn't left Los Angeles or joined the conservation corps. "I'd probably just be working at a local hamburger place. Or, to be honest, hustling and trying to get a job."

For now, Mosley has his sights set firmly on the future. Through the corps' learning center, he has been able to explore his career aptitudes and take introductory, computerized courses in such fields as law and banking. That exposure now has him planning on college ("I'm going to college—that's for sure") and a possible career in business management.

All of Mosley's problems may not be behind him, but he typifies a once troubled youth who is turning his life around with the help of a program and people who are giving him encouragement, a solid foundation and hope.

As he puts it, "I'm not looking back for nothing."

Derek Mosley is one of the lucky ones. Despite a dim past, he sees a bright future. Yet there are far too many young people today whose pasts mirror Mosley's but who have little promise of similar futures.

A tragically large number of our young people—for a host of reasons—fail to complete school, find only a succession of low-paying jobs or experience long bouts of idleness, bear children while still teenagers, or land on the wrong side of the law. And many will never break what has become a debilitating cycle that bears witness to one of our greatest and most persistent national tragedies.

The problems of at-risk youth, and youth unemployment in particular, have dogged our nation for the past several decades despite the expenditure of billions of dollars on hundreds of intervention strategies.

The implications of this far-reaching problem to the health and well-being of our nation are jarringly apparent.

Of our nation's 35 million young people between the ages of 16 and 24, about four million are seeking yet unable to secure employment. What's more, there is an alarmingly wide gap between employment of white and minority youth, with unemployment rates for black youth more than 2½ times higher.

Research and statistics reveal some other disturbing trends: Putting aside race, for instance, unemployment is concentrated among those young people who have grown up in poverty and have failed to complete high school.

The combined impact of those two factors takes on even greater

import when one considers that:

- In 1985, about one in five teenagers (and one in four pre-16-year-olds) lived in a family with income below the poverty line. It is estimated that 14 million children now live in poverty in the United States.

- More than 750,000 young people may be dropping out of school each year, and an additional 300,000 are considered chronic truants. While nationally the dropout rate is estimated at 28 percent, in some large, urban school districts the rate ranges from 40 to 70 percent.

- Dropouts experience unemployment rates almost three times as high as high school graduates.

- Among white dropouts between 16-24, more than 45 percent are estimated to be unemployed; among black dropouts the estimate exceeds 70 percent; and Hispanic youth experience the highest dropout rate and unemployment rates between those of black and white youth.

- Young people who are out of school and unemployed for more than 15 weeks are likely to experience recurring unemployment during adulthood.

Based on such statistics, it is fairly easy to identify those most "at risk" and in need of attention and assistance. They are: young people, especially minorities, from poor families; high school dropouts; students with poor academic and attendance records; pregnant and/or parenting teenagers; substance abusers, and those involved in criminal activities.

But if we can easily identify those at risk, why have we had so

little success in reducing their numbers?

In fact, there have been a host of programs, services and strategies ranging from remedial education, skills training, job placement, counseling, empowerment and self-esteem-building, aimed at serving our at-risk youth.

Just as the most successful programs have taken a multi-faceted approach to reshaping the lives of at-risk youth, support for these endeavors has come from a multitude of sources, including the federal government, the philanthropic community and, increasingly, the corporate sector.

The federal government has spent billions of dollars through the years on a host of projects to combat youth unemployment. Two of the government's earliest attempts to deal with the problem were the Neighborhood Youth Corps and the Job Corps, both of which were created in the 1960s.

Perhaps the two best-known federally funded programs are the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), of 1973-1982, and the Job Training Partnership Act, which replaced CETA and remains in place today.

Aside from the many federal initiatives, today more than 30 states, cities or counties have established youth conservation or service corps.

Among foundations, the Ford Foundation is recognized as a leader in the field in terms of both grant dollars and national visibility. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation also has a strong program emphasizing jobs for the disadvantaged and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation is also recognized for its grants for

national advocacy, research and demonstration projects in training at-risk youth.

Others include The Carnegie Corporation, which supports efforts to expand preschool education as well as to reduce attrition and improve achievement among at-risk junior high students, and the William T. Grant Foundation, which recently made a \$1.5-million grant to form a two-year commission that will study youth in the contexts of work, family and community. In addition, a number of foundations are active in regional settings such as the William Penn Foundation in Pittsburgh.

The corporate community has stepped up its role in assisting or training disadvantaged youth as well. Notable corporate-supported efforts include the Boston Compact and the Philadelphia High School Academies, which are helping urban school systems improve education and employment opportunities for youth.

Among business people, there is also a growing interest in helping at-risk youth. New York businessman Eugene Lang captured headlines in 1981 when he told 60 New York City sixth graders that he would give them each a \$2,000 scholarship if they completed high school and went on to college. His example is now followed by a number of individuals and corporations around the country.

As this commitment of finances and resources clearly indicates, there is no lack of concern for the problem. But despite such a tremendous investment, the problems facing at-risk youth have not been slowed, much less stemmed. Many would argue that the poor—and disadvantaged

youth in particular—actually are faring worse today than in the past. Why?

For one thing, the problem has been in the making for many years and the resulting trends are well entrenched.

During the post World War II period until 1973, the nation experienced strong economic growth. As a result, the percentage of the population below the poverty line declined considerably. But in the early 1970s, the country was rocked by a combination of forces—the oil crisis, the baby boom, rapidly changing technology and the onslaught of

rampant inflation—that drastically altered the bright picture.

Wages and family income began dropping, and the middle class responded by having fewer children and sending both parents into the work force. The already poor didn't have that option. In most cases, children were already present, and often there was only a single female heading the household. At the same time, an increasing number of out-of-wedlock births contributed substantially to increasing the nation's poverty picture.

In addition, the nation's manufacturing sector stalled, while opportunities in the professional, technical and administrative fields

*For many youth,
life is full of
mixed messages—*



sprouted. And because those jobs required more education and skill, "the group that suffered the worst in this stagnation was new entry-level workers," according to Gordon L. Berlin, who heads the Ford Foundation's programs for at-risk youth. "The skills young people needed (to hold jobs) were increasing and they didn't have those skills."

Compounding the problem, as of 1979, two million Americans each year have become unemployed because their jobs have disappeared. And the accelerating changes in trade, technology, and consumer demands are expected to produce even greater displacement in the future. As our economy has shifted from industry and manufacturing to a service base, what was once cyclical unemployment has become structural unemployment.

Today we are grappling with the at-risk population wrought by these economic factors, and the situation is rapidly worsening. First, there simply aren't enough entry-level positions in the job market for those with low—or no—skills. Second, many young people lack the basic academic and/or world-of-work skills necessary to obtain either entry-level jobs or occupational training. Third, both discrimination and keen competition in the labor market are barriers to youth employment.

Still, some argue that the outlook for young jobseekers isn't entirely bleak. It is predicted, for instance, that the number of young people between the ages of 16 and 24 in the labor force will decline from 24 million in 1984 to 22 million in 1990, and to 21 million in 1995. That shrinkage should

help lessen job competition. In addition, some analysts have predicted an expansion of the labor market, which should increase employment opportunities for young people.

What these arguments fail to address, however, is that any emerging job opportunities will still require that young workers have basic academic and work-related skills. Given the continuing high number of dropouts from our nation's schools, it is clear that the entry-level labor pool will contain a growing percentage of young people who lack those skills.

Clearly, what this bodes for American employers is increasing difficulty in recruiting an adequate number of able entry-level employees.

Indeed, today many experts insist that the cornerstone to employment for at-risk youth is the attainment of basic academic skills. What's more, there is considerable evidence that the best way to teach those skills is through competency-based, highly individualized, self-paced instruction—an approach that has proven effective not only with high school dropouts, but with those lagging behind in school.

Still, single-dimensional treatment programs—whether focused only on jobs or on remedial training in academic and occupation skills—are bound to fail given the myriad problems facing our at-risk youth. Robert Ivry, a senior vice president at Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) in New York City, is blunt about the limited value of programs providing only work opportunities: "Work experience alone is not

sufficient to allow dropouts to succeed in the labor market."

Various demonstration projects have shown that for young people to successfully integrate into the job market, three elements are essential: basic academic skills, early work experience and a healthy work attitude.

Although in the past, approaches emphasizing only one of these elements have been tried with high school dropouts, generally such programs have failed to have any long-lasting effect.

Many of those entering programs need help addressing personal problems, obtaining assistance from governmental and social services agencies, combating substance abuse—help that can only be provided in comprehensive programs offering broad services, extensive counseling and a supportive staff. As the coordinator of one youth training program put it: "We can't teach skills if a student's life isn't in order."

Unquestionably, such comprehensive programs are expensive. But clearly the cost to society may be greater if we fail to adequately address the issues of our at-risk youth—particularly those issues of unemployment.

Said one project director: "If we don't invest a little in the problem, we're going to pay the price later, because these kids are going to survive—even if their survival depends on ripping you and me off."

MDRC's Ivry is equally succinct:

"There's probably not an issue on the domestic policy agenda that deserves more attention because the whole future of our economy is at stake."

The Mott Program

Although the Mott Foundation did not develop a broad, national program to address the problem of youth unemployment until about 1980, concern for the health and well-being of young people has been clearly evident from the Foundation's beginning. Among the first programs funded after the Foundation's creation in 1926 was a Flint-area camp for underprivileged boys.

During the Foundation's early years, a number of grants were made for programs aimed at providing youngsters with adequate health care and recreational outlets. Indeed, in 1935 when the Foundation launched the community education program in Flint, it was seen, in part, as a way to address juvenile delinquency.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, as delinquency, truancy, school retention and youth joblessness began to attract increasing attention locally and nationally, the Foundation devoted considerable resources to programs for troubled and disadvantaged Flint-area youth.

Those programs—which included subsidized work experience, summer job opportunities, remedial and enrichment classes, alternative schools and more personalized in-school course work—were operated primarily through the Flint public schools and often in cooperation with the local juvenile justice system.

At the same time, the Foundation continued its support for projects that addressed the problem of pregnant and parenting teenagers in Flint—an initiative

that began in the 1930s and today encompasses a wide-range of projects nationwide.

Mott-funded projects in this field have addressed such issues as: primary prevention through the replication of a low-cost, school-based model for high-risk youth, and amelioration of the negative effects of teenage pregnancy once it occurs and the mother has opted for delivery.

Specific services have included: maternal health, child care, family life education and alternative schooling for pregnant teens. In addition, a variety of organizations have received funding to conduct research on adolescent sexuality, evaluate

*It is critical that
young people get a foothold
in the workplace.*



model treatment programs, hold conferences on teenage pregnancy prevention and provide various projects with technical assistance.

Since 1976, the Foundation has invested approximately \$4 million in the area of adolescent pregnancy.

As with our program in adolescent pregnancy, our work in the field of youth employment expanded to the national level in the late 1970s, building upon the Foundation's historical philosophy of developing strong, self-reliant individuals.

Since the early 1980s, the Foundation has supported basically two types of activities in the youth employment and training field: those that strengthen public policy and those that demonstrate hands-on approaches to helping at-risk youth become employable. During the past six years, the Mott Foundation has made grants totaling more than \$11 million for such activities.

Issues in Public Policy

In the area of public policy, the Foundation essentially has three grantmaking objectives:

- To advocate for the concentration of public resources on the truly needy rather than on those young people who are likely to succeed without special interventions.
- To advance the level of knowledge in the field and encourage the dissemination and replication of successful programs and strategies.
- To strengthen the leadership capabilities of those working with youth employment programs or

policies through networking, workshops, conferences and technical assistance.

Overall, our work in the public policy arena is designed to offer some perspective by monitoring the implementation of various strategies, focusing upon successful programs, highlighting the unfinished work ahead and influencing the design of new approaches.

In balance, our support of public policy initiatives has led to some significant contributions to the field. For example, a multi-year evaluation of the early implementation of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) has been credited with focusing high-level attention on amending and implementing the act to serve those most at risk.

That evaluation, conducted from 1983-1985 under the auspices of MDC, Inc., a private, non-profit organization with experience in employment policy and programming, uncovered two serious shortcomings in the implementation of JTPA:

- Payment policies and other factors encouraged providers of job training and placement to serve a more employable clientele at the expense of the more disadvantaged young people.
- The linkages between the public education system and the training and employment sector were far too weak.

JTPA, which was enacted in 1982 under the Reagan Administration as the successor to the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, requires communities seeking federal funds for the jobless to establish a Private Industry Council made up of representatives of local

businesses. Those councils are to assess local job opportunities, oversee training programs and encourage businesses to hire trainees. The councils contract with vocational schools and other organizations to provide the job training and placement services.

Initially, those contractors were paid primarily based on how many trainees were placed in jobs—essentially encouraging them to recruit and serve those most job ready. But following wide publicity of the MDC report, JTPA regulations were relaxed to allow contractors to be compensated for providing educational and other services.

In addition to the Mott Foundation's core funding for MDC's research and report (a total of \$100,000 over two years), three other funders also provided support: the Ford and Rockefeller foundations and the National Commission for Employment Policy.

Apart from the impact the MDC report had at the national level, it also brought to light several key issues requiring further exploration. The Foundation followed up with grants to MDC to raise awareness that at-risk youth were being overlooked in the national educational reform movement, and to the Structured Employment Economic Development Corporation (SEEDCO) to more fully examine the relationship between JTPA-funded training and employment programs and public education.

The second grant to MDC was made in 1984 when the country was still reacting to the release of the report *A Nation At Risk* and many other reports on educational excellence. Calls for massive school

reform were being heard from every corner of the nation.

With \$80,000 from Mott, MDC surveyed state educational excellence commissions to determine whether adequate attention was being paid to the needs of at-risk youth. MDC found that a clear majority of the commissions had largely ignored this population—even though at-risk teenagers make up as much as one-third of all high school students.

The survey further pointed out that instituting tighter education and graduation requirements while continuing to overlook those at risk could actually worsen the drop-out rate.

In MDC's final report published in 1985, entitled, "The States' Excellence in Education Commissions: Who's Looking Out For At-Risk Youth," the researchers concluded: "Continuing to heap students into a 'failing' group headed out of school toward unemployment is likely to have dire consequences for the economy of this nation. That can be said without even referring to the staggering loss of human potential."

Having sounded that alarm, the MDC report presented several recommendations and has been used by policymakers on the national and local levels to rethink educational policy.

The SEEDCO project, launched in early 1986, is expected to more fully establish the level of coordination between JTPA-funded programs and public educational institutions. SEEDCO, based in New York City, has considerable experience evaluating education, employment and training policies and programs aimed at the severely disadvantaged.

This two-year project, funded with approximately \$97,500 from Mott, ultimately will help identify obstacles to, and successful models for, effective coordination of services to at-risk youth.

Many of the early public policy grants made by the Mott Foundation were designed to mine existing information in the youth employment and training field, identify effective ameliorative programs and share that knowledge broadly.

To that end, the Foundation provided nearly \$240,000 over three years beginning in 1980 to the National Council on Employment Policy to analyze and disseminate the results of major federal, state and local programs addressing youth employment and training. In addition to publishing several books, the council also provided technical assistance to a number of programs and assisted federal and other agencies in policy development.

In a similar vein, the Foundation made grants totaling \$225,000 from 1983 to 1986 to Brandeis University not only to cull and distribute accurate policy and program information, but also to provide technical assistance and conduct leadership training workshops and conferences for practitioners.

Strengthening leadership also was one of the objectives of Mott seed funding for the establishment of the National Association of Private Industry Councils (NAPIC) beginning in 1980. Later when local private industry councils began assuming increased responsibilities for the implementation of employment

and training of disadvantaged youth under JTPA, Mott recognized the need for better networking and strong leadership and continued its support for NAPIC. From 1983 to 1985, NAPIC received \$90,000 from Mott to hold conferences, issue papers, develop a clearinghouse of information and provide technical assistance to local councils trying to establish programs for disadvantaged youth. The grants to NAPIC neatly complemented Brandeis' work by disseminating to local PICs much of the knowledge gleaned by the university.

Other important public policy grants that have received Mott support include:

- \$330,000 over five years to Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) to assess, develop and strengthen the role of states in reducing youth unemployment. Support for the project, beginning in 1982, grew out of recognition that states would assume greater responsibility for youth employment policy and programs under the Reagan Administration. By creating a national clearinghouse on state youth initiatives, publishing a series of working papers, and calling the attention of state decisionmakers to the plight of at-risk youth, P/PV has become influential in strengthening state policies on youth programs. Moreover, P/PV, using other foundation funds, has directly assisted states in establishing new policies and programs for unemployed, at-risk youth.

- A \$60,000 grant to the Hispanic Policy Development Project, based in New York City, in 1986, to focus attention on the severe dropout and unemployment problem facing Hispanic youth. In

addition to raising public awareness of the enormity of this problem, the project also is expected to evaluate and disseminate examples of successful intervention for helping Hispanic dropouts become productive members of the work force. The project is crucial since young Hispanics experience the highest dropout rate of any ethnic group, and that the Hispanic population is expected to jump from 14.6 million in 1980 to 24.5 million in 1990.

Demonstrating What Works

The Foundation has funded an array of projects to test and demonstrate new approaches to helping at-risk youth continue their education, enter job training and/or find employment. To document the effectiveness of such intervention strategies, most of the projects include an evaluation component.

The majority of these demonstration projects are aimed at youth who have already left school. Through the years, however, support has also been provided for several high school-based projects focusing on dropout prevention, enriching the high school experience or easing the transition from school to work.

Common to the various demonstration projects are one or more of the following objectives:

- To help young people develop a sense of self-esteem, self-confidence and empowerment.
- To help young people achieve basic academic proficiency and, in many cases, useful occupational skills.
- To help young people acquire

essential life-coping skills and a solid work ethic.

Several projects are noteworthy in illustrating how those objectives have been incorporated into Mott's demonstration initiatives.

- **Jobs for America's Graduates, Inc.**, is a school-based program operating in a number of communities nationwide to help young people make the transition from school to work. The program is specifically designed for high school juniors and seniors who have been identified as potentially unemployable. Such youngsters participate in a vocationally-oriented student organization that provides basic employment skills, an orientation to the world of work, placement in private-sector jobs and continuous follow-up during the nine months after graduation.

Steering the program in each community is a non-profit, public service corporation, with a governing board composed of local leaders in business, government, education and labor.

Begun in 1979 as Jobs for Delaware Graduates, the concept was replicated in several other states beginning in 1980. At that time, a new national organization, Jobs for America's Graduates, Inc., was formed to coordinate and assist the replication sites.

Through the years, approximately 23,000 young people (about 70 percent of whom are minorities) have participated in the program in nearly 30 cities. The program has achieved an 85 percent success rate for those who complete the program in their senior year of high school.

The concept has received support from a variety of sources, including

several foundations and the federal government. The Mott Foundation, for instance, provided \$500,000 in grants between 1981 and 1985. Currently, Jobs for America's Graduates is using a \$70,000 Mott grant to implement and evaluate a dropout prevention strategy for 10th through 12th graders.

- Another school-based program is Learning to Earn, a comprehensive curriculum that helps students identify career interests, learn job interviewing techniques and find part-time employment. Operated through the Industry Education Council of California, Learning to Earn was launched in San Jose High School in the fall of 1982. Today the course is offered in approximately 25 California school sites. It is estimated that by the end of the 1986-87 school year, about 2,400 students will have completed the course.

The Learning to Earn concept, which strives to reduce school absenteeism, the dropout rate, anti-social behavior and youth unemployment, has received support from private businesses, community leaders and educators.

The Mott Foundation not only provided the initial funding for Learning to Earn, but also made grants totaling more than \$300,000 during the past five years to support the project. From inception, the project has attracted support from several other sources, including the Hewlett and Packard foundations, the State of California and local school districts.

- The Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP), developed by the Remediation and Training Institute in Washington, D.C., uses computers to determine

a student's level of competency in various subjects and to provide instruction in areas where the student is weak. The CCP approach is highly individualized, allowing for self-paced advancement to progressively more difficult subject matter until full mastery is achieved.

The Mott Foundation played a key role in the establishment of the Remediation and Training Institute in 1984. Created by Robert Taggart, the Institute's purpose is to increase both the effectiveness and accessibility of basic skills education—particularly for the unemployed and for young people needing remediation. The Ford Foundation has provided the major core support since 1984.

Prior to launching the Institute, Taggart directed the Mott-funded Youth Knowledge and Development Project with the National Council on Employment Policy. From that work, Taggart concluded that a lack of basic skills—especially in literacy and computation—is the single major obstacle facing the chronically unemployed. Through subsequent and extensive research, support by the Mott and Ford foundations, he and his staff developed CCP.

Today the Institute oversees a network of more than 200 learning centers nationwide in such diverse settings as community-based organizations, schools, correctional facilities and job training centers. Evaluation data of the almost 5,000 students enrolled in CCP learning centers indicates that students gain one to three grade levels per 100 hours of instruction with overall gains being 2.5 times the national norm for adult basic education.

The Institute recently received a \$300,000 commitment from the

Mott Foundation to help expand its network and provide technical assistance to already operating centers.

Aside from these initiatives, the Mott Foundation has extensive experience in summer youth employment programs and, in recent years, has provided significant core support to undergird conservation corps programs. Further, the Foundation has funded a number of other youth employment projects, four of which are described in detail in the following section. While each project differs in population served and services offered, all share the goal of reducing youth unemployment.

In Detroit, Twelve Together uses peer support and counseling to help ninth graders in the public school system improve their academic performance and increase the likelihood of graduation.

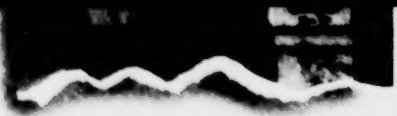
In Oakland, California, the East Bay Conservation Corps (EBCC) combines paid work experience in the conservation field with a strong remedial education component for disadvantaged persons from 18 to 23.

In Richmond, Virginia, 70001, a job training and education program for out-of-school youth between 16 and 21, offers pre-employment training, education classes, tutoring, counseling and job placement services. It is part of a network of 50 such programs in 20 states.

In Dallas, El Centro College Job Training Center is part of a national project known as JOBSTART, involving approximately 2,000 young people across the country. The program offers academic remediation, occupational skills training and job placement services to high school dropouts between 17 and 21.

Getting it all together in Oakland





Michigan Twelve Together

Thirty-seven ninth graders form a large circle in the middle of a rustic lodge and make a declaration that is supposed to radically change the course of their lives. The words to the pledge are solemn, but the group raucous. Together they shout:

"I believe that I am a unique, creative and dynamic person who will someday contribute great things for the betterment of myself and mankind... I believe in the future and I am

convinced that I will graduate. I will let nothing and no one interfere with my achieving this goal... Regardless of what obstacles we meet, together we are going to make it..."

As the final words reverberate through the room, the lights are dimmed and each student lights a small, white candle. Slowly, they begin to sway and sing.

The last note marks the midway point in a weekend retreat designed to introduce the students to the Twelve Together program, which has operated in Detroit high schools and served about 1,000 students since 1982, under the direction of the Metropolitan Detroit Youth Foundation.

The program brings together 12 students from one school and develops them into a cohesive group that can lend each other a listening ear, a shoulder to cry on, and sound advice as they progress through freshman year. Overseeing each group are two adult volunteers.



*Twelve Together nurtures support
through peer counseling.*

The goal is to provide the students with enough self-esteem, self-confidence and support to ensure that they not only will successfully complete ninth grade, but will ultimately graduate from high school.

Support for the program has come from a number of sources including the Mott Foundation, which has provided about \$200,000 since the program started. In addition, the youth foundation has mustered support from an impressive list of Detroit-area businesses (such as a major health insurer, the city's two daily newspapers, hospitals and churches) willing to "adopt" a group and provide meeting space, volunteers, transportation, snacks and various other incentives—including jobs.

Given the youth foundation's experience in developing drop-out prevention programs, Twelve Together would seem to be a logical way of addressing the alarmingly high dropout rate in Detroit's public schools. Detroit school officials admit that about 45 percent of students entering ninth grade never graduate; others put the figure at closer to 65 percent.

The beauty of Twelve Together is its simplicity and minimal cost, says Joseph Radelet, youth foundation associate director. Radelet acknowledges that there's nothing new about peer-group counseling, but maintains that the strength of Twelve Together is that it reaches young people at a critical time in their lives. Because the program relies heavily on volunteers, each group costs only about \$5,000 a year to operate.

Selection of students begins with a presentation made by youth

foundation staff to all ninth graders in a particular school. Application forms are distributed and about 200 students usually take them. Staff reviews the applications and 50 to 70 students are interviewed.

Interviewers generally look for students who express an interest in helping themselves and others, and a willingness to accept advice from peers. They also look for an equal number of males and females; a mix of students that will reflect the school's interracial composition, and a balance of at-risk and not-at-risk students. Students considered at risk of dropping out of school, have poor records in attendance, discipline or academics and/or live in a single-parent household.

Once a Twelve Together group has been selected, an equal number of students are identified for a control group. By establishing both, the youth foundation has been able to have an outside evaluator assess the effectiveness of the program. There are currently 42 Twelve Together programs operating in 22 Detroit high schools.

According to a recent evaluation report, Twelve Together participants had an impressive promotion rate into 10th grade—18 percentage points higher than the control group.

To acclimate new students to the Twelve Together concept and to allow the students to mingle in an informal setting, the weekend retreats are held. Generally two high schools, each with two groups, participate. Before the weekend ends, the participants must commit themselves to attending all 30 group meetings held once each week after school;

studying a minimum of 1½ hours per day; never skipping school, and above all else, sticking together.

In the past, advisors have had widely varying backgrounds—professors, college students, factory workers, housewives, business owners and social workers. They are all volunteers and participate in a two-day training program before being assigned to a group.

According to Donna Lovette, director of the Twelve Together program, the volunteers generally are "people who have spent a lot of time analyzing themselves. They've done a lot of self-searching and are able to help young people do the same." Lovette, who helps screen and train volunteers, said they tend to be "very warm" and "have no problem at all expressing to the group that they care."

Still, advisors must walk the fine line between nurturing and smothering. They are to play the role of discussion facilitators—not parents, confidants or counselors. And although they can ask probing questions, solutions to problems are to come from the peer group.

At times, students share startlingly intimate problems—including incest, pregnancy, drug abuse and criminal activities—that may be beyond the competence of 12 youngsters and two non-professionally trained adults. To deal with such matters, Lovette and other staff members are familiar with the social services network in Detroit, and professional referrals can be quickly arranged.

Generally, however, the problems shared are fairly minor, ranging from trouble with

teachers to spats with siblings, parents or schoolmates—issues that participants feel more comfortable discussing with peers than with adults.

"Being in a group where they recognize other kids, where (others) have gone through these things—felt these things makes them feel better," said Lovette. Through the peer-counseling process, the youngsters also learn how to evaluate themselves, understand their feelings, motivations and reactions, and come up with answers themselves.

And Lovette is convinced that "young people *are* effective in dealing with each other once they've been given a format to fine-tune their skills."

Eric Garrett can attest to that. An advisor for the past four years, Garrett, 35, and a dropout himself, has seen groups deal effectively with a wide range of problems. "There's a camaraderie they have (in the group) that I like. They believe in each other. They believe in themselves."

Garrett eventually earned a GED and now works fulltime at a Detroit-area General Motors plant as well as attends classes in industrial management at a community college.

"Kids have to start early getting the direction they want to take in life." And that's where Twelve Together comes in. The program "gives them hope that there's something different—something other than the street life."

Still, might not Twelve Together participants make it through high school even without the program? After all, students choose the program; they are not referred by the courts, counseling programs or

other social services agencies. Thus they would seem to have a degree of motivation not always present in young people in other programs for at-risk youth.

Lovette acknowledges that "It is easier to work with students who want the help." But she can just as readily point to a student who had been raped and received no family support during the crisis. "I don't know if she would have made it" without the help of her Twelve Together peers.

One high school student is

emphatic that it was Twelve Together that helped him escape the dangerous downhill course his life was taking.

With his conservative clothes, close-cropped Afro and impressive vocabulary, he looks and acts the part of the college-bound, all-American teenager. And when he says he wants to go to college and become a corporate lawyer, it doesn't sound at all incongruous. His image belies a past that includes failing grades, "snatching cars," toting guns and dealing drugs.



*A little help
from their
friends goes
a long way*

His detour into drugs and thievery was brief but intense, and quite out of character. Raised in a black, middle-class family by parents who are both white-collar professionals, he attended a parochial school and earned good grades until about eighth grade.

It was then he "started experimenting with pot, new friends and stealing cars," he says. "I got tired of being the goodie two-shoes. Nobody likes you when you're a good guy."

While a freshman, he joined in big-league drug dealing and worked for a gang headed by adults. He started carrying guns—a .38, a derringer and a .22 "for protection." When he bothered to attend school, he was the "cut-up and the clown."

His parents, disgusted by his failing grades by year's end, yanked him out of private school and sent him to public school. By then he was entrenched in the gang and making big money selling drugs.

"In three months I had \$5,000 in the bank. I tried to delude myself

that I was getting the money for college. But college wasn't what I was thinking of," he says.

He readily admits he didn't need the money, but his parents wouldn't buy him "name stuff"—designer jeans and tennis shoes and Rolex watches. Drug money bought him all of that and more.

Looking back, he says, "I was Machiavellian; the ends justified the means."

By the end of the first semester of his sophomore year, he was flunking. What followed was a rapid series of events that dramatically changed his life. First, his mother found a gun in his room. In her eyes, "I couldn't have done worse if I'd worshipped Satan."

Next, he watched someone convulse and die of a drug overdose. It was a shattering experience. "When the guy died, that was it. I was through. I realized what I was doing might kill somebody. Someone's life was too much of a price to have on my conscience."

Finally, he heard about Twelve

Together. Because of his special problems, he was allowed to join despite his sophomore status.

Without the group's support, he says, "I would have had to drop out of school. I wasn't going to repeat grades. . . If I'd kept going down, there's no way I could have crawled out."

Still, extricating himself from the gang wasn't easy. "I was making money for the gang. They didn't want to let me go. I was trapped." It took the support and encouragement of the Twelve Together group to ultimately break free.

He remains convinced that if he hadn't found Twelve Together he'd be a high school dropout today, working full time for the gang. And even that, he says, assumes some luck. "A lot of my acquaintances—people I knew and worked with—have been killed in gang fights, territorial disputes, police shootings."

In fact, he will gladly set straight anyone who doubts the profound impact Twelve Together can have on a young person's life: "I think I'm alive because of it."

California
East Bay Conservation Corps



The East Bay Conservation Corps (EBCC) in Oakland, California, isn't for the weak—in body or spirit. Mornings start with a vigorous 30-minute workout, complete with jogging, jumping jacks and other limbering exercises, followed by eight hours of back-breaking work, ranging from cutting and clearing overgrown brush to fortifying a river bank with 100-pound rocks.

Fridays, while not spent in the field, are no picnic either. Corps members must spend the day in various educational workshops, covering such topics as first aid, leadership skills, money management and career development. In addition, corps members spend a minimum of 8-10 hours per week in class honing their reading, writing and math skills and, if necessary, preparing for the GED.

On days worked, corps members

earn \$3.35 per hour; for attending class they receive no pay.

Combine all that with a no-nonsense set of proper conduct rules (bringing drugs, alcohol or weapons to work or class means immediate dismissal; showing up at a work site without proper attire means no work and no pay) and it's easy to see why EBCC may not appeal to all young people.

Still, EBCC, in operation in the San Francisco Bay Area since 1983, has reached—and reshaped—the lives of more than 800 economically and educationally disadvantaged young people between the ages of 18 and 23.

Currently, there are nine crews

totaling 90 corps members working year-round on a wide range of conservation projects. Typically, the corps attracts more male than female members (the ratio is about 3 to 1), and more blacks than any other ethnic group. Although designed as a 12-month program, the average length of participation is about six months, said Joanna Lennon, program founder and executive director.



*At East Bay
Conservation Corps,
self-paced learning is a program strength.*

"We usually lose some kids in the first two weeks," she said. "A lot of kids don't understand what they're getting into." Besides, she added, "We're tough. It takes commitment to succeed here."

Upon joining the corps, all members are tested for academic and functional proficiency. As Lennon explains, even corps members with a high school diploma often have serious academic and life-skill weaknesses. About 70 percent of all corps members participate in the remedial education classes.

Such emphasis on education is just one way EBCC differs from many other youth service corps programs nationwide. Education has always been the weak link in the youth corps movement, says Lennon. To be successful long term, corps members need not only work experience and vocational training, but also basic academic and functional competencies.

That explains why EBCC sought funding from the Mott Foundation to create a Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP) Learning Center. With the help of a

\$60,000 grant from Mott, EBCC renovated space in the warehouse it uses as an office, installed a bank of computers and began using the CCP system in the fall of 1986.

The addition of the CCP center has been warmly received by both teachers and students, says James Sternberg, EBCC's education coordinator.

In the past, teachers had difficulty creating lessons appropriate for everyone in the classroom, given the widely varying abilities of the students. Often the pace was too slow for some, too fast for others. That problem has been eliminated thanks to the CCP system and teachers are now able to spend more time helping students individually.

As for the students, Sternberg said, "These are people who in their normal lives probably never would come in contact with computers." Having a chance to use one—and master it—is empowering to them." For many corps members, "this is the first time they've been in an educational environment and experienced success," he said.

Conservation projects undertaken by EBCC during the past few years have included: developing scenic overlooks, renovating low-income housing and community buildings, planting trees and flowers, restoring wildlife habitats, rehabilitating watersheds, improving community gardens and tending public lands.

Work is performed under reimbursement contracts with various land management agencies in the east bay area. In fact, about 80 percent of EBCC's roughly \$1.5 million budget comes from contract fees. (EBCC also receives support from several foundations and corporations.)

All jobs done by EBCC must be environmentally sound and have some learning value, said Lennon. Generally, jobs assigned to the corps are those that overburdened park personnel can't get to. "We don't take jobs away from people. We do work that wouldn't otherwise be done."

That's probably why EBCC has not raised the ire of municipal workers' unions. In fact, Anne Scheer from the East Bay Regional Park District, one of the EBCC's biggest contractors, said the unions "support the corps crews all the way." Scheer acknowledges that the park district probably could find others to do the work faster and cheaper, but "I don't think we could get it done better. The kids are enthusiastic, and they work really hard. In the long run, this is the least expensive way of getting the job done."

Though many of the jobs performed by the EBCC are guaranteed to work up a sweat, that doesn't faze corps member James Lee Harris III. In fact, Harris relishes the idea of getting dirt

under his fingernails. He delights, for instance, in recalling his first job with the corps: digging up hard, compacted dirt to install pipes for a lawn sprinkling system. "It was fun, I loved it," he said, grinning. "It was a chance to push yourself and get dirty and smelly."

Unlike many corps members, Harris, a tall, black muscular 19-year-old, had his high school diploma and some experience in landscaping before joining EBCC several months after graduating in 1985.

He also had some experience with the criminal justice system.

Late one summer night during his high school years, Harris and some friends stole a cassette deck from a parked car. The police spotted them and gave chase. Harris eluded arrest, but by morning, word was out that the police knew his identity. Recognizing that what he'd done was both wrong and serious, he turned himself in.

Being booked, photographed, fingerprinted and assigned to a probation office had a marked effect on him. "My probation officer knew I got led by the wrong people," he says. "He was like a big brother and a friend. He set me on the right track."

It was from his grandfather that Harris picked up some of his landscaping know-how. After finishing high school, he even started his own landscaping company but the work wasn't steady. Joining EBCC seemed like an ideal way to add to his knowledge.

Apparently, Harris is a quick study. Two months after joining the corps he was promoted to crew leader. "I love the conservation

corps. It makes you look for perfection. You're not the same person after a month or two here." EBCC, he said, "introduced me to a lot of nice people. It's instilled a lot of responsibility in me. I respect the environment more now, too. . . . If it wasn't enriching my life, I'd leave."

That pretty much sums up Barney Caldwell's feelings about EBCC. At 52, Caldwell is the oldest crew supervisor on EBCC's staff. After a long and full career in law enforcement, including a stint as a special agent in the California attorney general's office, Caldwell began working for EBCC last fall.

For Caldwell, who speaks three languages, holds two bachelor's degrees and still runs a successful food catering business on the side, working for the corps combines two of his greatest loves: the outdoors and people. And, he figures, being black he can be a good role model.

His age has been somewhat of an anomaly, earning him a certain degree of respect among the crew members. "They tell me things they don't even tell their parents," he said. "They have a lot to say. And somebody has got to listen."

Perhaps it is also the fact that Caldwell has three nearly grown children of his own that has given him certain insights into young people. "I give them their respect. That's what a lot of them don't get. . . . It's so important when they feel you care (about them). A lot of them are seeking the love they didn't get at home. That's why they get involved in drugs and other things."

So committed is Caldwell to helping the kids on his crew that

he encourages them to call him with problems at home, weekends or evenings, and is willing to use his personal time for tutoring.

While some of his crew easily could try anyone's patience, Caldwell seems to have an infinite supply. "As long as I can teach them and be some good to them, I'll be here. If I keep a kid off the street, and they go on and make something of themselves—that's what it's all about."

That's largely what EBCC is all about. "We say we are preparing kids for life," said Lennon. "We're making kids employable, there's no question. We're making them more literate and more job ready—ready for any entry-level job in any field."

It is Lennon's hope that every young person will leave the corps more motivated, more self-assured and more aware of his or her options.

Lennon, a warm, energetic leader who holds degrees from Berkeley and possesses a knack for making everyone from kids to corporate presidents feel comfortable, likes to think of EBCC as a "laboratory." In it, she and her staff are mixing a number of essential elements: discipline, work experience, educational opportunities, counseling, self-esteem building and leadership training.

And if the formula works in the East Bay—with its high youth unemployment rate and mix of agricultural, rural and urban lands—she sees no reason why it couldn't become a "prototype for a national model."

"We have the potential to change the face of youth unemployment and education in this country."

Virginia
Richmond 70001

It wasn't so long ago that James E. Alexander had no high school diploma, no job, no work experience and practically no hope. It was 1983, Alexander was 20-years-old and no matter how many doors he knocked on to find employment, they were all slammed in his face.

Just when it seemed things couldn't get worse, he was arrested for drinking under-age in a public place. Handcuffed, carted to the police station and locked up, Alexander remembers being "scared to death."

Hoping for a quick bailout by his grandfather, he was stunned when his grandfather nonchalantly took the news over the telephone, said he was having supper and would come down to the station

later. When his grandfather finally did come, "it was only three hours later, but it seemed like 12. It was a very, very scary experience."

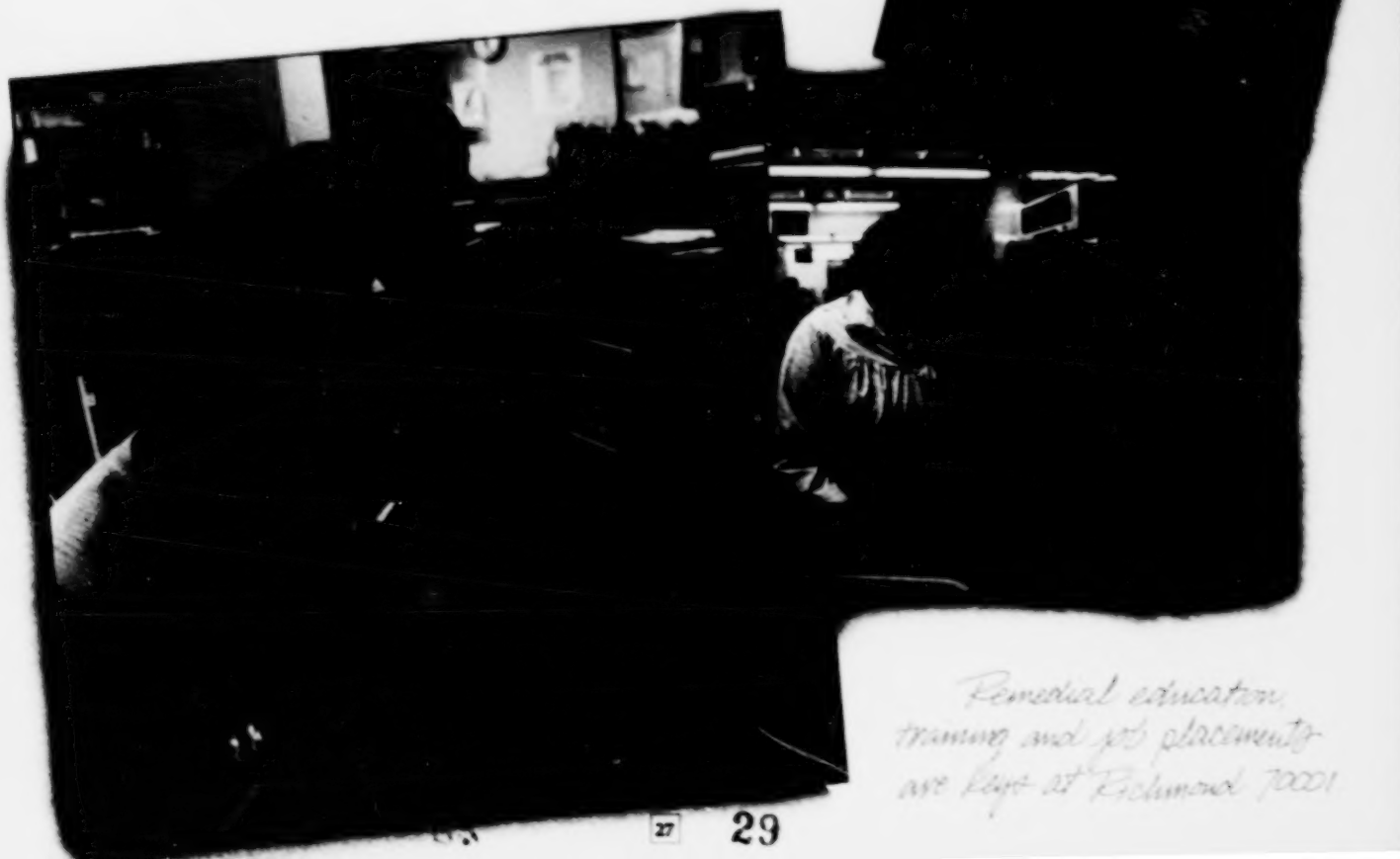
Raised by a caring but stern grandmother and still living with her at the time, she stepped up the pressure on Alexander to begin doing something constructive. In no uncertain words she "gave me a talk and told me I needed to make something of myself—that I was hurting myself."

She also clipped out a newspaper advertisement for Richmond (Virginia) 70001, a job training and placement program. That was the turning point.

Richmond 70001, is a chapter of 70001 Training & Employment

Institute, a Washington D.C.-based, non-profit corporation providing educational and employment services to dropouts in about 50 sites across the country.

Since 1980, the Mott Foundation has provided the national 70001



*Remedial education,
training and job placements
are kept at Richmond 70001.*

office with more than \$250,000 to support development activities leading to increased corporate support for new, individual programs.

Services offered at Richmond 70001 include: pre-employment training, a four-week course detailing how to find and keep a job; basic educational classes; leadership training, and job placement.

For Alexander, the complement of services was exactly right. Although he had tried another program offering GED test preparation, he didn't finish the course. "It was like a dried out orange compared with the fruitfulness of 70001," he said. From his first day at 70001, Alexander found people who "cared not only about what I was doing in the program, but about me."

In two months, Alexander had his GED and he was hooked. He immersed himself in the leadership training activities offered at 70001 and quickly began making a name for himself as an articulate spokesman for the Richmond program at regional and national meetings of 70001 chapters. In all, he figures he earned some 18 awards for various achievements in the program.

But the real feather in his cap was serving on 70001's National Leadership Team from 1983 to 1985. Team members not only sit on 70001's national board of directors but may also travel to Washington for meetings and conferences, meet members of Congress, offer Congressional testimony, appear in media interviews and advertisements and address program funders.

Alexander says it was the

experience of a lifetime. Even now, he marvels at "how everyone had confidence in my ability. People saw things in me I couldn't even see."

After leaving the program, Alexander took several computer classes at a local business institute, worked as a computer operator for a retail company and, in late 1986, landed a good-paying job in the traffic logistics department of a food distribution company. There he will be able to add to his computer experience.

Listening to Alexander, who is bright, polite and well-spoken, it is hard to image that he once earned Cs and Ds in high school until, finally, he quit. Now his educational goal is "a master's—at least a master's—in sociology, human relations, social science, something like that. I'm sure I'll do it eventually." After all, "advancement comes with education and experience. They go hand-in-hand. You have to have both to be a well-rounded employee."

Alexander may be the exception at Richmond 70001, but he's also the role model. Started in 1982, in four years the program has served more than 530 young people, called "associates." Although the program is open to out-of-school youth between the ages of 16 and 21, most are between 17 and 19. By far the majority of associates are black (97.5 percent), and about 60 percent are females. No vocational training is provided at Richmond 70001, and associates receive money only for transportation.

The program, which will operate in the 1986-87 year on a budget of about \$232,000, is funded through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Referrals come from a

variety of sources, including schools, social services agencies, community-based organizations and word-of-mouth. In addition, the program has placed classified advertisements in newspapers, and has been mentioned in radio announcements—two extremely successful recruitment methods.

In the past, the program heavily emphasized job placement, said Linda Jackson-Shaw, program manager since 1982. That's because until recently, JTPA provided a lump sum for services rendered, with no funds earmarked for education. In practice, service providers were rewarded for quick job placements and, thus, many associates joined the work force without a diploma or the equivalency.

But under the program's new JTPA contract, funds are specifically provided for education. To Jackson-Shaw, offering educational services simply makes good sense. "Ideally, I would say nobody gets a job (though the program) without academic upgrading...or a GED."

To provide the best educational facilities, in 1985 Richmond 70001 used funding from the Ford Foundation to institute the computer-based Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP).

These days, the associates seem enthralled with the new technology and pleased with the individualized and personalized attention they receive in the classroom, said Jackson-Shaw. "For many associates, this is the first time they've ever had an instructor even call them by name or recognize something they've done."

Small classes and the attentiveness of teacher Jackie

Hayden hooked Charlotte Travis on Richmond 70001 in 1984. "As soon as I got into 70001, I said, 'I'm going to like this.' And they didn't disappoint me," she said.

Plagued by serious health problems that forced her to leave school after ninth grade, Travis married at 17 and had two small children by the time she was 20 and decided to enroll in the program.

After leaving school, she held several low-paying jobs—nurses aide, fast-food worker, cleaning woman and babysitter. "I knew if I wanted a career that paid good, I'd have to have a (high school) equivalency. It was my goal. No matter what, I was going to get it."

Though Travis, 22, currently is staying home to raise her four children, eventually she'd like to work in the day-care or secretarial fields. Like Alexander, she attributes her quick GED attainment to the special help she received from Hayden.

However Hayden, who serves as the program's education coordinator, isn't concerned solely with whether her students master multiplication tables and grammar. Just as important, she says, is that they develop a positive self-image, a sense of purpose and an appreciation for the opportunity offered at Richmond 70001.

At the same time, Hayden and the rest of the staff provide plenty of nurturing. Even outside the classroom, staff at Richmond 70001 spend considerable time working and talking individually with associates, said Pat Foster, the program's employment coordinator. "By talking to them one-on-one, a lot of times you can win them over.

I think that may be what's missing in a lot of programs and schools."

That one-on-one is also important with associates who sometimes enter the program without a strong work incentive. "These kids, with their socio-economic background, see a lot of people not working. There's a lot of unemployment around them," she said.

Although Foster is responsible for locating jobs and linking associates to them, she is emphatic that the best way to start up the career ladder is with the sure footing provided by a solid education.

"I believe the academic component (at Richmond 70001) should be the number one component," she said. "You simply can not go out there unprepared. Without an education, you're just discriminated against."

Indeed, surveys of Richmond-area employers indicate that they were not looking for people with vocational skills as much as they were looking for people with the basics—reading, writing and arithmetic.

That may be one reason why Richmond 70001's track record for job placement has been quite good, with more than half of all associates securing employment. Like other 70001 centers, the Richmond program takes great pain to involve local businesses in advisory committees or as job sponsors.

"The majority (of businesses) have been extremely receptive," says Jackson-Shaw, adding that she senses many in the business sector feel a moral responsibility to help

address the youth unemployment problem.

"They want to do whatever they can. We even have employers call us (out of the blue) and say they want to hire some participants." And even when an associate doesn't work out, most businesses are willing to try again or assist the program in other ways.

Through the years, local businesses have hired more than 260 associates; sponsored "career day" forums to expose associates to various job opportunities; conducted tours of their facilities, and hosted parties for the youngsters.

Although the majority of jobs offered through the program are entry level, occasionally positions for semi-skilled workers, such as machine operators, have come up. Jobs generally pay slightly more than minimum wage and might include positions in maintenance, child care, retail (including warehouse work) and the food service industry (primarily restaurants and college cafeterias).

While job placement services certainly are a selling point for Richmond 70001, Jackson-Shaw says that the small size of the program may be what makes it most attractive, particularly to young people who have tried other programs or felt alienated from the traditional school system.

Unquestionably, Richmond 70001 helped Alexander blossom. Through the program he gained both knowledge and self-confidence, he said. And, perhaps most importantly, "I learned things—about what you possess within yourself—that I don't think I'd have learned anywhere else."

Texas
El Centro College Job Training Center

For the young people in Pat Ebert's remedial education classroom, overcoming major academic handicaps is only half the battle they wage daily. They also are fighting seemingly insurmountable personal battles against abusive parents or spouses, confusing welfare rules, relentless peer pressure and long-term dependency on alcohol or drugs.

The weight of those burdens often leaves Ebert's students mentally distracted or physically exhausted by the time class begins. Yet somehow she must impart not only the fundamentals of math and English, but also a sense of hopefulness about the future.

"They have a self-defeating mentality that we're trying to change around," Ebert said. "We're trying to help them make the shift from a victim mentality to a survival mentality."

That sums up the goal of El Centro College Job Training Center



*JOBSTART participants at
El Centro College Job Training Center
focus on vocational training.*

in Dallas, Texas, one of 14 sites selected by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) to participate in a national youth employment and training demonstration project known as JOBSTART and involving at least 2,200 people.

El Centro, the only job training center in Dallas, opened in the late 1960s as a skills center serving the underprivileged. In 1982, it became part of the community college system. Currently, El Centro operates two programs: a vocational training center for 17- to 24-year-olds, and JOBSTART's education and job training program, which began in March 1986.

JOBSTART is aimed at low-income, high school dropouts aged 17 to 21. Each JOBSTART site offers remedial education, occupational skills training and job placement. Funding is provided primarily through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

Under MDRC's research design, participants will be tracked after leaving the program to determine the effectiveness of the JOBSTART model in improving their educational and occupational success. MDRC, which has experience managing and evaluating demonstration programs designed to help the disadvantaged become more self-sufficient, has provided JOBSTART sites with both financial and technical assistance.

To fund management and research activities of the national project, which is expected to cost about \$5 million after five years, MDRC put together a consortium of public and private funders that includes: The Mott, Ford, William and Flora Hewlett, Rockefeller, Aetna Life & Casualty and

Stewarts foundations, American Telephone & Telegraph, Atlantic Richfield, Chase Manhattan Bank, the U.S. Department of Labor and the National Commission for Employment Policy.

The Mott Foundation, which provided leadership in the development of the JOBSTART concept, plans a six-year, \$800,000 commitment to the project.

To establish a large enough research sample, each JOBSTART site is expected to recruit an average of 200 applicants, half of whom receive services for 12 months. The rest serve as a control group. Placement in one group or the other is made randomly.

The control group members, while excluded from JOBSTART, are eligible to pursue other services available in the community.

MDRC staff acknowledges that the idea of control groups is a sensitive issue for community-based programs such as El Centro. Random assignment is necessary; however, in order to provide credible research findings on whether the JOBSTART model is effective in helping participants attain self-sufficiency.

The problem with most past studies of dropout programs is that they have not taken into account what would happen to youths in the absence of a particular program; hence, there is very little reliable evidence of what works for this group.

While El Centro staff are committed to the research model, they recognize that random assignment entails sacrifice. One intake officer said that the hardest part of her job is telling an eager applicant that he or she has been chosen for the control group.

In addition, the high number of participants needed to fill both the test and control groups has made recruitment an arduous task. "We might talk to 100 kids to get two of them to come into the program," said Antonio C. Mendoza, who serves as coordinator of student services and handles recruitment. "It's really tough. . . . These kids aren't just sitting around wanting to come into the program."

Nevertheless, "the name of the game is recruiting," Mendoza said. And at El Centro, no technique is too offbeat or extreme. For instance, the staff has developed radio and cable television spots, posted flyers in self-service laundries and grocery stores, and distributed bulletins coupled with free hot dogs in public parks.

They've used public school lists of recent dropouts to make direct phone calls, and visited public housing projects and community centers where young people congregate. They've driven through neighborhoods with bullhorns and, to reach Dallas' sizable Hispanic population, they've worked with various Hispanic organizations and participated in several Hispanic holiday celebrations.

Perhaps the hardest group to recruit are those young people who are "third and fourth generation welfare recipients," said Mendoza. Often these young people see little reason to join the work force. Another equally difficult group, he said, are those who have been out of school several years. "If you take a recent dropout, you can salvage them. But if they've been out (of school) two or three years, then you've lost them. They're almost impossible to reach."

After potential participants have



Putting training to work

been identified, they still must meet certain eligibility requirements. They must, for instance, score below the eighth-grade level on standardized math and reading tests, and meet JTPA's income eligibility standards.

Currently, El Centro has about 98 JOBSTART participants, with an equal number in the control group. Of those receiving services, about 70 percent are black, 24 percent are Hispanic and the rest are white. Generally, they are between 17-19 years old, and more than 60 percent are female.

Participants are required to complete a minimum 200 hours of remedial education. Ebert, who teaches the classes, makes a concerted effort to give students individual attention and to "set small, attainable goals so they can see themselves succeeding," she said.

Offering a non-traditional classroom experience is important in any youth education and training program, said Dr. Marshall Holman, director of El Centro. "You can't bring these young people into a traditional classroom. That's why they dropped out of school in the first place."

After completing the educational

component, students can enroll in one of El Centro's eight, hands-on vocational training programs. They include air conditioning and refrigeration; automotive service and repair; paint and wall covering; cable television installation, and office careers.

Also built into the JOBSTART program are an extensive course designed to teach life-coping and world-of-work skills; intensive counseling; bilingual teachers and counselors to help Hispanic participants, and an "allowance" of \$5 for each day they attend the program with a \$5 bonus if they come all five days.

El Centro is one of the few JOBSTART sites to develop an Executive Mentorship Program, which matches each participant with a member of the business community. The concept has been well-received in Dallas' business circles, said Mendoza, who has high hopes that it will reinforce positive values in the young participants.

Despite the comprehensive services offered at El Centro, not all JOBSTART participants stay in the program, Mendoza said. Often they face such strong opposition from home that they succumb to the pressure to drop out. Many participants don't have family support and often parents want their children to work, not attend classes.

Ebert agrees. The socioeconomic background of her students is far removed from the middle class where parents usually want their children to excel in school and at work, she explained. In contrast, her students' parents often feel threatened by the idea that their children may do better than they did.

Combatting that negative influence is part of Ebert's job. So is exposing her students to the world around them. That's why she has organized several field trips—to the public library, Neiman Marcus department store and the luxurious Adolphus Hotel in downtown Dallas—places most of her students have never set foot in.

While Ebert and the other instructors have had their share of belligerent, detached students, they've also experienced the joy of seeing students persevere in the face of formidable odds.

Eighteen-year-old Louann Sanchez is a case in point. A welfare recipient and mother of three children all under school age, she finds it a struggle to get to class on time, much less keep up with homework. Still, she is adamant about wanting to get her high school diploma and off welfare.

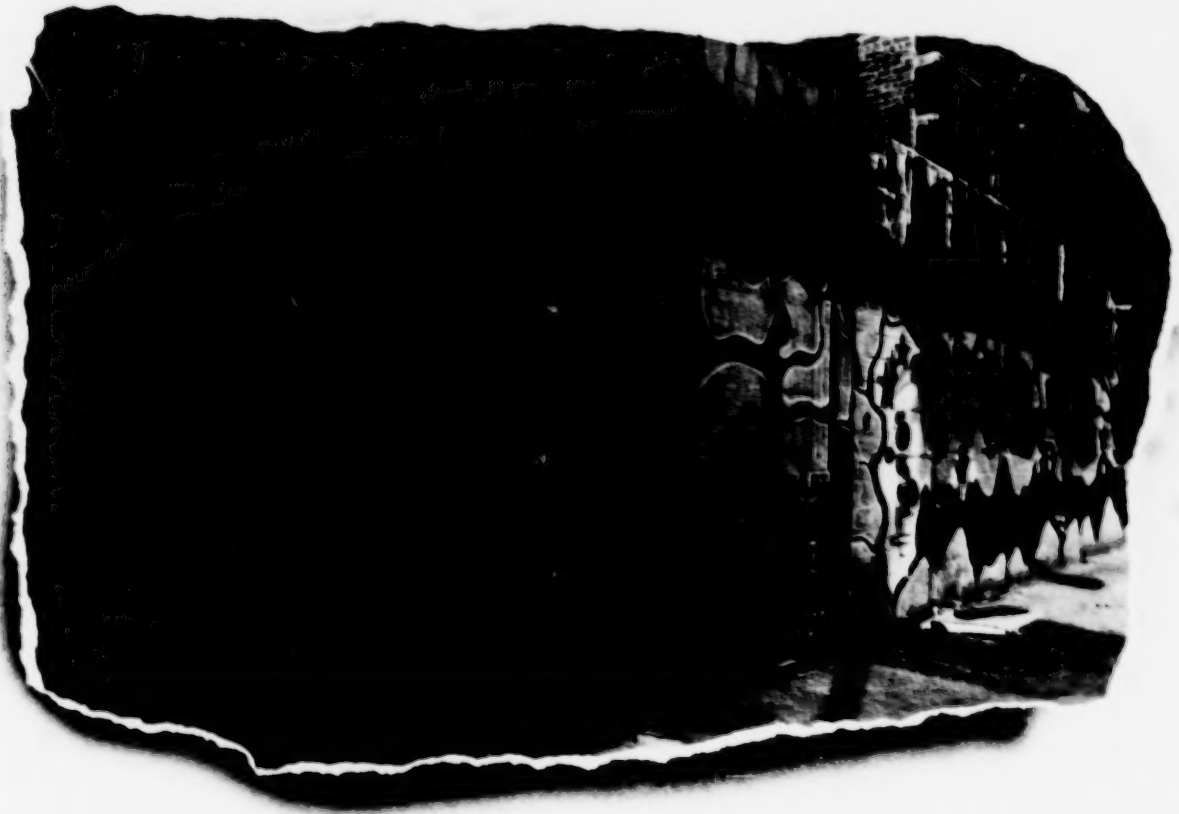
What makes it worth it, she said, are her children. "I want to make a better future for them—not just me." Sanchez is troubled to hear things such as "once a mother is on welfare, her kids will be, too. I don't want that for my kids."

Eventually Sanchez plans to enroll in the office careers program at El Centro. She has one specific long-range goal: "I've dreamed, ever since I was small, of having a big house with a fence. And I'm going to get that. Dreams can come true if you just pursue them in the right way."

Ebert would concur. As she is known to say in her classroom, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

It is a simple message, but one that embodies the intent and spirit of El Centro's JOBSTART program.

Off The Edge And Into The Mainstream



As these projects clearly show, there is no single solution to the problem of youth unemployment. But if we are to come to grips with the implications inherent in ignoring a growing population of youth who are unable to participate in our economic system, multiple solutions that address such fundamental issues as education, employment and service delivery are clearly critical.

What's more, if our attempts to assist at-risk youth are to ever be successful, perhaps first and foremost our nation must make a clear commitment to tackling this national tragedy head on.

That such a commitment is sorely lacking has not escaped the

notice of such experts in the field as Michael A. Bailin, president of Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), a Philadelphia-based research and demonstration firm.

Says Bailin: "We've been hindered by the fact that there have been different administrations with different priorities and different programs at different points in time. No sustainable philosophy prevails."

Addressing the issues of at-risk youth, he said, "requires lots of patience and resources... we just haven't been willing to sustain the effort... There's no constituency at the political level—at-risk youth is an insufficient issue to galvanize politicians."

Yet Bailin believes the very future of our nation's economy and our ability to compete globally, rests with youth.

"When you start looking at the labor force down the road, it's really frightening. We're not generating people who will be able to produce—who will be able to put us in a competitive position."

Perhaps then the best way to make policymakers and the public focus attention on youth may be by emphasizing the broad economic implications of a work force comprised of young people with poor or no academic or job skills.

As it stands, according to Bailin, many people are not alarmed

about youth unemployment because "after all, there's plenty of adult unemployment, too. We can't get people to look at the youth unemployment problem without first getting them to focus on economic competition, or our social security system going down the drain."

And given that the percentage of at-risk, hard-to-employ youngsters is expected to rise as the total number of our young people is projected to decline in the near future, Bailin and other experts see lack of action as impending disaster for our national economy.

Still, both Bailin and Gordon Berlin at the Ford Foundation maintain that simply providing at-risk youth with jobs isn't the solution. "They need jobs," said Berlin, "but the evidence is that they also lose jobs when they don't have the skills to keep them."

"We need to get away from the notion that a single intervention at a single point in time will make the difference." The problems facing at-risk youth today are "multi-dimensional, complex and interrelated."

Larry C. Brown, Jr., president of 70001 Employment & Training Institute in Washington, D.C., agrees.

"Too many of our (nation's) programs are focused on a specific symptom, rather than on human development," he said. "We need to be much more comprehensive about how we provide human development services to young people. That has to be a national priority—and it isn't."

Brown, whose 70001 operation provides academic and job skills to young people through a network

*Our nation's future rests
with our young people*

of programs nationwide, has no difficulty identifying the factors that put children at risk. "It sounds trite, but they lack role models, self-esteem, a sense of themselves—a sense of purpose and meaning."

"A lot of young people don't see possibilities. And even if they do, they don't know how to access them."

As a result, Brown believes, the support or services young people receive are not so much what they need, but what they have stumbled into.

Both Brown and Bailin maintain that what must be done to more effectively address the problems facing young people is not only new programs and more research, but sweeping changes in the social services delivery system.

Bailin argues for better coordination of services at both the state and local levels. Ideally, all of the agencies concerned about at-risk youth—from schools, welfare offices and the juvenile justice system, to employment and training programs, YMCAs and community-based organizations—should be working together. Currently,

however, the services provided are badly fragmented, he said.

To test the feasibility and effectiveness of better coordination, P/PV recently worked with various agencies in three states to develop a more cohesive system. The results were especially promising in Oregon, where a Youth Coordinating Council was created and state agencies began working together on problems, legislative initiatives and funding.

Brown has a somewhat different suggestion for revamping the delivery system. He recommends consolidation, with the school as the primary service delivery point.

"We need 'comprehensive high schools' that not only are focused on education, but are prepared to provide the support and social services kids need today."

Brown acknowledges that many school officials resist the idea of being all things to all people, and





*Comprehensive programs
can help young people
reach self-sufficiency.*

he recognizes that current resources do not allow schools to add responsibilities.

Nevertheless, "Schools are getting all the problems—drugs, violence, pregnancy, dropouts—like it or not. The schools are becoming the surrogate parents for the community. And if it's all being dumped on schools, let's face the fact and let's do it."

He points out that the only large system that has potential contact with every young person in the country at some point in time, is the schools. "Yes, schools are in the business of education. But the definition goes far beyond that."

Brown also advocates more rewards for teachers and others who work with young people. "In this country, we don't accord people with financial remuneration or esteem for working with young people. The bottom line is money. If we do believe in educational excellence, then teachers and the delivery system are important and we must make the financial investment."

To that, William F. Pierce, former executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers in Washington, D.C. adds: "Unless we solve some of the problems of education today, we will be unable to provide a sensible educational experience for all of our children."

Toward that end, Pierce recommends improving the quality and quantity of the nation's teaching force; instituting more accountability, including more testing of students and teachers; and being mindful that the decreasing number of minority teachers means fewer role models for students.

"We have to find solutions to these problems, and lack of resources is no longer an excuse."

Indeed, Pierce goes so far as to call for a federal entitlement program aimed specifically at at-risk youth. At minimum, he suggests a three-pronged approach to dealing with at-risk youth:

prevention, intervention and remediation.

That view gets a nod from Brown, who works in the remediation field, but still touts the benefits of prevention. By way of example, Brown points to Head Start as one of the few national programs that has made a significant, long-term difference in the lives of youngsters. "The best dropout prevention program is preschool," he says firmly.

"In the past, we have not concentrated on prevention (at 70001), we're a salvaging operation. But what we do is important. I think we have an ethical obligation never to abandon anyone, at any time they happen to need help."

Like Brown, Berlin maintains "it's never too late to intervene." In fact, he sees at least one critical reason to intervene with older teenagers: "Given that 17- to 21-year-olds also are having the children of tomorrow, if we work to raise their skills today, we can have an effect on a generation hence."

Indeed, research indicates that the education of one's parents, especially the mother, and the

amount of reading that occurs in the household, are important correlates of a child's predicted achievement in school. In addition, it has been shown that the completion of one extra year of school by a child's mother is associated with more than a half-grade improvement in the basic skills of her children.

As Berlin puts it, "to educate the child, you must educate the parent."

In addition to emphasizing education for parents and their children, Berlin also recommends that resources be put into: thorough evaluations of treatment programs; broad dissemination of successful intervention strategies, and creating better outreach mechanisms to draw needy young people into programs.

Outreach efforts are "one of the critical ways we need to use community-based organizations. We forget how important they can be in building bridges and connections to underprivileged kids."

But regardless of the intervention mechanism or strategy employed, Pierce believes that above all else we must "make kids know they can succeed. They can have high expectations and achieve them."

"We must convince these kids that we value them, that we don't want them to fail, that we won't tolerate their failure."

Indeed, Dorothy Stoneman, who heads the Youth Action Program (YAP) in East Harlem, has devoted most of her career to communicating that crucial message to young people, especially those at risk.

A former Harlem schoolteacher, Stoneman believes that young people should be considered

partners in their own development—not passive clients. "Any (program) which demeans people—makes people recipients of services—reinforces the problem."

Young people often are bursting with creative ideas, all they lack are the skills to implement them. And that, she said, "is where adult partnerships come in."

Not surprisingly, then, the myriad programs offered through YAP, including youth crime patrols, a drop-in center, construction skills training and teenage pregnancy prevention, all emphasize youth and adults working side-by-side as equals.

"There is an assumption that adults and professionals have superior information and judgment—and that's how they make the wrong decisions." In fact, Stoneman believes so strongly in the intelligence of young people that she is willing to put herself on the line: "My judgment often is not as good as young people's."

"All of the solutions (to societal problems) I've been involved with always have put the decision-making in the hands of the people involved—whether that was community organizing, community development or whatever... People need to run their own lives."

And that goes for young people, too, even those who have been mistreated or made to feel "inferior, stupid, not worthy of respect or doomed in this society to be poor," she said.

"We have to reverse the past invalidation of their intelligence. All it really takes to develop someone's thinking ability is someone to listen. Someone has to say to young people, 'What do you think?' They're not used to

being asked."

Clearly, that is part of the unfinished work that lies ahead in the youth employment field. There is more, much more.

Bailin, for instance, recommends better targeting of resources on the most severely disadvantaged, arguing that the payoffs with that population are greater.

Although he acknowledges that young people who "only need a little boost" can be helped easier and faster, Bailin maintains that the majority eventually will find their way into the job market without intervention.

But what of the seriously at risk?

"Those who are most at risk are a drain on public dollars and will not easily find a way. They will forever be a permanent drain and that will be perpetuated by their children."

Indeed, working with at-risk youth, regardless how disadvantaged, is a massive undertaking, where progress is often slow and solutions often seem dwarfed.

But as people like Berlin point out, "even small successes are good. We need to focus on building on those successes, rather than dismissing them as inconsequential."

We cannot afford to wait for a single solution that will eradicate the problem, nor can we shirk our responsibility to act decisively or swiftly. After all, our young people hold in their hands our future societal harmony and economic viability. The problems will not go away.

As Bailin so aptly puts it: "We ignore young people at our peril."

The Youth Perspective

The basic objective of the Youth Action Program (YAP) in East Harlem, New York, is simple: To create an effective alliance of youth and adults by coupling the energy and idealism of young people with the experience and skills of caring adults.

Over time, that goal has been translated into a carefully thought out philosophy as well as an extensive array of programs and services. YAP's founding philosophy was that the waste of resources inherent in the thousands of idle young people in Harlem was a reflection of weaknesses in the economic and social system.

To rectify that, YAP organizers maintain that young people should not be turned into "clients," but rather should be helped to gain the confidence needed to address their own problems.

And they have shown their ability to do just that in myriad YAP programs, including a youth center, neighborhood crime patrols, a pregnancy prevention program, a scholarship program, job training in carpentry and a housing rehabilitation fund.

During 1986, a \$75,000 grant from the Mott Foundation was used by YAP to strengthen those core programs and to replicate and disseminate them.

Started in 1978, about 400 young people have had central leadership responsibilities in YAP, and about 20,000 others have been touched by YAP programs or city-wide programs created through YAP advocacy.

Last September when the Mott Foundation's Board of Trustees visited YAP, a number of YAP members freely shared some of their experiences and thoughts.



*The talents of YAP members
spill onto an outside mural.*

More recently, some of those members met with Foundation staff to discuss in more detail the problems facing at-risk youth. What follows are excerpts from that dialogue. In this case, names have been changed.

Why are you here? What made you decide that you needed the help of a program in your life?

Rita: At the time I became involved, I was homeless. I used to come here frequently to interact with my fellow students. Frankly, I didn't feel that there was any grown-up around who really cared about me. My self-esteem was very low. I didn't believe I could accomplish very much. I was pushed to come at first. While sitting around for four to six hours I got to know everyone. I just got more and more involved. Before long I got to noticing that the young people who were involved had a real sense that they wouldn't be taken for granted. It's like written on a piece of paper there. But they don't just tell you about the positive and baby you. They look at the bad parts and positive parts. If you've got a bad idea, they'll tell you about it or something like that.

Denitta: I was really messing up in high school and everything when I first came here. After several times of coming, I saw that there were young people who felt they had some responsibility. I began talking with a few folks and they gave me encouragement. I saw that people here had real spirit.

Mary: If I had not found out about this program, I'd be in jail. I found out about it and came here and went through the procedures. I didn't think I could make it but I did. I got my GED. I've been there

approximately one year and I've learned a lot for the time that I've been there. I learned a lot of responsibilities. I learned how to get along with people. I just feel great. I'm going somewhere.

Wendall: The reason why I came here was because I dropped out of school January 1, 1985. I went to three different schools then. During that whole year I was doing little jobs, making a little bit of money. I was getting into trouble. I was trapped. I figured I can't go back to school, they're not going to accept me, but if they did, what's going to happen anyway? One day I woke up in the morning and on my bed I found a newspaper. My mother placed it there. I looked through it and saw this ad.

Craig: I needed something where I could put something in and get something out. When I heard about the construction program, I said wait a minute. Here I can see what I'm putting out. I went into the construction program on all fours and it made me kind of happy. I had a reason to get up in the morning. The money was great and everything else seemed to fit what I needed. The life experience itself is there.

Willie: In the beginning it was sort of like a game to me. I used to just come and hang out and joke around. I started seeing what the program was doing and how it's growing more and more and I kept coming. I was on drugs at the time but the more I got involved here, the more I decided I wanted more for myself and could have more for myself despite where I come from.

Are you saying that a lot of your "problems" are a product of where you live?

Luis: That has a lot to do with it. People see something from 118th Street and Park Avenue, that's Harlem. Then all they see is what they want to see. Try taking that into a job interview with you. People don't give you a second chance. You get cut off usually almost immediately. They refuse to take into consideration your situation, what's going on around you, what's happening in society and the changes in your life.

Where do your families fit into all of this? Do they see it the way you do?

Marcellus: Families—no. The majority of the time families are like: "I'm the mother—you're the son. You do as I say. You're living under my roof. You don't like it, get out." I've done for my mother. How many times haven't I stuck my neck out for her when there were problems in the house.

Lee: Families refuse to look back. Meanwhile, they'll talk to you one-on-one about your problem, their problems and how you're the cause of everything, but they don't want to listen to you.

Luis: My relationship is different. We don't speak to each other.

What about your teachers and counselors? Do they care?

Willie: Even if they cared, they don't have a chance to do anything about it. I mean, these teachers don't just have one class of 40 students but seven classes. And then, a lot of them are counselors too.

Is caring from those teachers and counselors all that important to you? So many of you dropped out. Why?

Willie: They (the teachers) had painted a picture of the type of students that were there. It was like we were on the verge of being corrupt or drug addicts or just plain, old emotionally disturbed. If I was to go speak to one of my counselors, that's how they approach you with this real nervous attitude and they come out with this off-the-wall advice that doesn't even relate to the majority of the kids. They stereotype you a lot.

Vincent: I went to art design. In the latter part of my third year, they cut off all funding for two classes and basically pulled the rug out from under me. My goal was taken away from me, my grades went down, I dropped out. I stayed out for a good six months. I joined the Marine Corps. I had problems over there. I suffered an accident and had to come home. Then it was like I was done for. They learn about your past life and only see you on the surface. They just don't want to deal with it.

How would you counsel them to change the schools?

Rita: Treat a person more like an individual, not a statistic because they look at numbers.

Do you think, perhaps, that the teachers feel as if they've been lumped into some big classification and that they might feel the same way?

Denitta: Some of them. You always find there're two or three out of the vast majority.

Craig: But they're not enough. They don't make up for that majority that's constantly putting you down, destroying your self-esteem.



Getting down to the core with YAP members

How are they destroying your self-esteem?

Vincent: They're the ones with the mouth. They're the ones that can say you can do this or you can't. If you come from some Ivy League town where the school's name alone backs you up, you've got it made.

Marcellus: It's part of human nature to destroy what you don't understand or to downplay it. You can come from an Ivy League town, move to New York and you don't want to make a friend with this guy who's from downtown Harlem. You figure his big brother was a drug dealer and his father stole for a living and his mother was some kind of prostitute.

Willie: This one teacher came from Cleveland and he totally flipped out. I don't know why they put him in East Harlem. Sure enough, we gave him the best education he ever had.

Rita: It's not just the teachers. The students are no prize either. But it's like the school system tells them, "Listen, these kids are statistics and statistics only, so this is how you have to treat them and this is how they act."

So what has to be done to correct the system?

Luis: Well, first, they've got to have smaller classrooms. And the kids, just as well as the teachers, have to be serious about their education. They have to stop smoking crack and stuff like that and get serious.

Rita: What you do is have interesting classes. I had a teacher one year that all he did was write on the blackboard to communicate with us. There's got to be more communication. Don't just teach white history, teach Hispanic history, teach black history. And don't get some white in there

teaching black history. Get a Latino in there, get a Latino that came from Puerto Rico, that grew up in Puerto Rico and can talk about it. You only learn one side of the board and when you're black and Latino you say, "Well, this isn't my world. This is a white world and I'm not fitting in so great."

Mary: There's not too much you can do to get a student to be serious about his education. It's all up to you individually. The thing is, it's up to the teachers to find out who that individual is. "Why is Mary Elizabeth doing so bad in school?" The counselor can approach that person in class or privately and find out what's going on. Then they can communicate with a teacher so that they'll have a better understanding of what's the situation going on with that person. They can do good counseling. They can do good counseling with people like this in hospitals and others places. They can do it in school.

Unemployment among young people who are considered at risk is phenomenally high. Do you worry about getting a job and being able to make a living?

Marcellus: It scares me. Getting a job carries a lot of weight because it's me, the individual, against all of those numbers and statistics. My life experiences, I can tell you straight up, they weren't all that great.

Vincent: If it was possible to get education from private sector and commercial elements it would help the economic disadvantaged. Even in just providing the materials. My mother was on welfare before I was born. She got married and her

husband left her and that was it. She was stranded. Meanwhile, I had problems in school my whole life. I had fist fights with teachers. I've gone to schools where I had to fight to get in the class and fight to get home. When my stepfather died, it hurt me both emotionally and economically. I took a mediocre job two hours a day, \$30 a week. It couldn't cover the class projects we had to put out.

Craig: One way to help a kid drum up interest in school is like give them \$1 an hour. It will give them a reason to get up in the morning. If I go to school with seven hours in classes and at the end of the day I have \$7, at the end of the week I have this, it would help the family maybe make ends meet.

What about missed opportunities? Are there things that you could have done at some time in your life to change things?

Rita: There are a thousand things. I regret my lack of success, not because of my parents of anything like that. The thing about blame is that it doesn't do any good no matter what. There is no point in blaming yourself. There's no point in blaming anyone else.

So what does motivate you?

All: Responsibility... Security... Togetherness... Understanding... Opportunities... Encouragement... Closeness.

Rita: All of those things are motivations. It helps give you back your self-esteem because society out there is pretty hard. This program motivates us. They teach you a whole bunch of skills and goal setting, coping with frustration, some survival skills.

Vincent: But you also need help from people who have power.

Do you all look at yourselves as survivors? What do you worry about for the future?

Marcellus: I worry about making the same mistakes I made before I came here. I'm a hothead. If a person rubs me the wrong way, then we'll go out the window. I like that. I was raised like that. It was my own form of protection and then, I also blame myself for my own ignorance. I've been offered opportunities and I didn't take them. I figured maybe it's going to take too much work, or it was going to be something that might not turn out right anyway. I look back, I should have jumped on the boat and taken off. Now it's like I'm looking at opportunities and I know what to look out for and what not to touch. I'll use more reasoning rather than let my temper guide me.

Willie: The only thing that scares me is cocaine. It's so easy to get into and they say it knows nothing but your nostrils. I'd like to work on my willpower now so when I'm confronted, then I'll know how to deal with it.

Vincent: I'm probably still going to be fighting for jobs that I might not be able to get. The future will be very bleak if I can't get anything solid.

Wendall: I know what I did yesterday but I know what I'm doing different today and I'm going to do that tomorrow. I'm hoping for a lot when we talk about the future. All I know is that here I am. With God's help, I'm going to make it. Nobody's going to stop me from reaching my goal.

How To Apply For A Grant

Information We Need

The Mott Foundation primarily is interested in making grants for demonstration, action-oriented programs. We are particularly interested in innovative approaches to solving community problems—approaches that, if proven successful, can be disseminated to or applied in other communities.

Outside the City of Flint, we do not, as a general rule, support capital development, endowment, or pure research projects. However, these types of grants may be considered when they are necessary to carry out or advance other Foundation program objectives. The Foundation does not make grants or loans directly to individuals.

The Foundation does not have grant application forms. Grant proposals can be handled in one of two ways. The prospective grantee may either submit a brief letter outlining the details of the project being considered, or may send a full proposal. The following basic information is needed:

- A description of the project and what will be accomplished.
- An explanation of why the project is needed.
- A description of the population to be served.
- A line-item budget, including fiscal year.
- Information about the organization seeking the funds, including its tax exempt status and its accomplishments to date.
- Starting and ending dates, plans for post-grant funding and project evaluation.

Proposals should be clearly marked GRANT PROPOSAL and addressed as follows:

Office of Proposal Entry
The Mott Foundation
1200 Mott Foundation Building
Flint, Michigan 48502-1851

Because our Board meets quarterly, proposals may be submitted at any time during the year. Grant proposals should not be given directly to trustees. Due to the large number of requests we receive, visits, unless by invitation, are discouraged as is direct contact with individual trustees. Requests for meetings with Foundation officials will be initiated only by the Foundation.

About Our Process

It generally takes about three months for the Foundation to process a request for funding. An incoming proposal is assessed by a program officer to determine whether it falls within the general interests of the Foundation and its current funding priorities. A recommendation is made to either proceed with further investigation or to deny the request.

That recommendation is reviewed by the Proposal Review Committee, comprised of the Foundation's senior management personnel. If the committee believes the proposal deserves further investigation, it is returned to the program officer who is responsible for investigating the proposal and making a recommendation to fund, or not to fund. Often this investigation includes lengthy conversations with the applicant and, frequently, a site visit.

Once the program officer's recommendation is completed, the proposal is returned to the review committee, which determines if it will be funded under special presidential authority or Board action.

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